

Date: July 7, 2017

From: Acting Principal Executive Director, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction and
Acting Chief Acquisition Officer (003)

Subj: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Source Selection Authority (SSA) Delegation Pilot
Program (VAIQ 7766121)

To: Associate Executive Director, Technology Acquisition Center (003B2)

Thru: Executive Director, Office of Acquisition Operations (003B)

1. Purpose. This memorandum announces the VA Source Selection Authority (SSA) Delegation Pilot Program and outlines mandatory established criteria and procedures for the appointment of selected Office of Information Technology (OIT) officials as the SSA for individual source selections or groups of source selections.

2. Background. Class Deviation from VA Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) 815.303 – Responsibilities (attached) requires, “The authority of the Secretary to appoint an individual other than the contracting officer to serve as the SSA for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions is hereby delegated to the Heads of the Contracting Activities (HCAs). If an individual request specifies someone other than the delegated contracting officer as the source selection authority for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions, the requester shall prepare a request and justification and shall submit the request through channels to the appropriate HCA for approval.” Under my delegated authority as Acting Chief Acquisition Officer, the Associate Executive Director, Technology Acquisition Center is designated the applicable HCA for the purposes of this initiative.

3. Effective Date. Upon signature.

4. Expiration Date. This program will remain effective from date of signature unless incorporated into the VA Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) or the VA Acquisition Manual (VAAM) or rescinded.

5. Applicability. For contracting actions to be eligible for SSA delegation under this program, the following criteria must be met:

- a. Responsibility for the requirement must belong to OI&T.
- b. The Independent Government Cost estimate is in excess of \$5 million.
- c. The action utilizes FAR Part 15 and the best value continuum for source selection procedures.

6. Action Required. When a non-1102 (Contracting Series Career Field) is nominated

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to be an SSA for a specific action, the individual shall meet the following criteria to be eligible for designation:

- a. be an SES with expertise in the product market, product line, or line of services related to the requirements of a specific acquisition; and
- b. must have at least one of the following:
 - 1) possess a Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) or Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) Level III certification.
 - 2) a resume that demonstrates equivalent non-Federal experience with the responsibility of acquisition and contracting functions; or
 - 3) successfully completed the following three source selection training courses through the Department's Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy (VAAA):
 - i. FQN 440 (Basic Source Selection),
 - ii. FQN 446 (Advanced Source Selection) and
 - iii. FAC 065 (The Customers Role on the Acquisition Team)

7. Success Measures. When a non GS-1102 (Contracting Series Career Field) is appointed as SSA for a specific action, the following areas will be used to measure the success of the OI&T SSA pilot. These following areas will be used to measure individual, as well as organizational success.

- a. Protest Sustainment Rate. Per the Government Accountability Office Bid Protest Annual Report to Congress for fiscal year (FY) 2016, the average protest sustainment rate from FYs 2012 through 2016 was 16.6% and will be used as the base line.
- b. Procurement Action Lead Time (PALT) as established and measured by the Office Acquisition and Logistics.

8. Please direct questions regarding this initiative to the Office of Acquisition and Logistics (003A), Procurement Policy and Warrant Management Services (003A2A) at (202) 632-5288 or email: va.procurement.policy@va.gov.



Stella S. Fiotes, AIA

Attachment

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: **DEC 15 2016**

From: Acting Deputy Senior Procurement Executive (DSPE)

Subj: Class Deviation from VA Acquisition Regulation(VAAR) 815.303 – Responsibilities (VAIQ 7759423)

To: VA Head of Contracting Activities (HCAs)

1. Purpose: To issue a Class Deviation to VAAR 815.303—Responsibilities

2. VAAR Section Impacted: VAAR 815.303.

3. Effective Date: Immediately.

4. Expiration Date: This class deviation will remain in effect until incorporated into the VAAR or the VA Acquisition Manual (VAAM) or otherwise rescinded.

5. Applicability: This deviation applies to all VA contracting activities.

6. Background: The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.303(a) states, "Agency heads are responsible for source selection. The contracting officer is designated as the Source Selection Authority (SSA), unless the agency head appoints another individual for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions."

The FAR 15.303 does not prohibit delegating this authority. It is in the Government's best interest, when permitted by statute, to expedite procurement processes through the flow-down of procurement authority.

7. Current Policy: The present VAAR Subpart 815.3, Source Selection, Section 815.303, Responsibilities, states:

"The authority of the Secretary to appoint an individual other than the contracting officer to serve as the source selection authority for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions is delegated to the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) and is further delegated to the Deputy Senior Procurement Executive (DSPE). If a Head of Contracting Activity (HCA) wishes to designate an individual other than the delegated contracting officer as the SSA for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions, the HCA shall prepare a request and justification and shall submit the request through channels to the DSPE for approval".

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Responsibilities (VAIQ 7759423)

8. Need for Deviation: Based on the current 815.303, Responsibilities, a class deviation to VAAR 815.303 is required to delegate to the HCAs the authority to designate an individual other than the contracting officer as the SSA for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions.

9. New Policy: VAAR Subpart 815.3—Source Selection, Section 815.303—Responsibilities, is changed to read:

"The authority of the Secretary to appoint an individual other than the contracting officer to serve as the SSA (Source Selection Authority) for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions is hereby delegated to the Head of the Contracting Activities (HCAs). If an individual requests someone other than the delegated contracting officer as the source selection authority for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions, the requester shall prepare a request and justification and shall submit the request through channels to the appropriate HCA for approval".

10. Attachment: VA Class Deviation from VAAR Subpart 815.3—Source Selection, Section 815.303—Responsibilities.

11. Additional Information: Questions and concerns should be addressed to the Office of Acquisition and Logistics (003A); Procurement, Policy and Warrant Management Service (003A2A) at (202) 632-5288 or email: va.procurement.policy@va.gov.



Phil W. Parker

Distribution:

Under Secretaries for Health, Benefits, and Memorial Affairs; Chief Facilities Management Officer, Office of Facilities Management; Head Contracting Activities, Directors, VHA Service Area Offices; Directors and Network Contract Managers, Veterans Integrated Service Networks; Directors, VA Medical Center Activities, Domiciliary, Outpatient Clinics, Medical and Regional Office Centers, and Regional Offices; Directors, Denver Acquisition and Logistics Center, Corporate Franchise Datacenter, Records Management Center, VBA Benefits Delivery Centers, and VA Health Administration Center; and the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, VA National Acquisition Center, National Cemetery Administration

Class Deviation from the VA Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) 815.303

Determination and Findings

Findings

On November 28, 2016, a request was made to streamline the process for approving someone other than the contracting officer as the source selection authority. Presently, this authority resides with the SPE and the DSPE.

In 2015, the VA Acting, Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) instituted an Employee Empowerment Initiative (EEI). One outcome from this initiative is to improve operating efficiency by streamlining decision making and acquisition-related approval processes to the lowest practicable subordinate acquisition activity level. Therefore, to foster the EEI streamline process, a deviation from the present VAAR 815.303 is required to appoint an individual other than the contracting officer to serve as the source selection authority for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions.

Determination

In accordance with FAR 1.404 and VA Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) 801.404, I hereby issue a class deviation to delegate to the Head of the Contracting Activities (HCAs) the authority to appoint an individual other than the contracting officer as the Source Selection Authority for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions. This authority is non-delegable.



Phil W. Parker
Acting, Deputy Senior Procurement Executive

12/15/16

Date

Class Deviation
Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Regulation 815.303 - Responsibilities

815.303 - Responsibilities

The authority of the Secretary to appoint an individual other than the contracting officer to serve as the SSA (Source Selection Authority) for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions is hereby delegated to the Head of the Contracting Activities (HCAs). If an individual requests someone other than the delegated contracting officer as the source selection authority for a particular acquisition or group of acquisitions, the requester shall prepare a request and justification and shall submit the request through channels to the appropriate HCA for approval.

END